

<b>Subject:</b>	Changes to Communities Team Function	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Customers and Communities	<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Leader of the Council and Communities and Partnerships
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	<b>RECOMMENDATION(S)</b>
1.1	That Cabinet notes the structural changes proposed to the Communities and Operations Functions and agrees the continued consultation on changes to work prioritisation.
1.2	All future minor amendments to the Parks and Open Spaces service to be delegated to the Director of Customers and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the outcome of a review of the Communities Function and the ongoing consultation on work prioritisation.

## 3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
  - **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
  - **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

## 4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

Not reviewing the way that we currently run our services would leave The Council at risk of not being able to meet the challenges of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to make the financial cuts required.

## 5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 5.1 As part of our response to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as set out in the report to Cabinet on 12 June 2012 – 'Medium Term Financial Strategy – Achievement of Budget Reductions', we have been reviewing all service areas, including the Communities Team.

- 5.2 Proposals to consult on the review of this service area, and a number of others, were presented to Cabinet on 12 June 2013, and this was approved.
- 5.3 The Communities Team was previously reviewed alongside the Operations Team in March 2011, which led to a reduction of 7.8 Full-Time Equivalent posts, 3 of which had been financed by Housing Market Renewal funding. The Parks and Open Spaces Function and some of the Street Cleansing function was also transferred into the Communities Team at this time. This was approved by Cabinet on 17 March 2011.
- 5.4 In January 2013, the Communities Manager left to go to another job and the post was not filled. Since that time staff have been reporting directly to the Director of Customers and Communities.
- 5.5 In addition, one Locality Officer left to go to another job in May 2013 and wasn't replaced, and another Locality Officer finished in early November, also to go to another job. It is not intended to replace this post.
- 5.6 Because of the further reduction in staffing numbers in the Communities Team and in the Operations Team, and the ongoing challenge to make further financial cuts, it was considered appropriate to review the work of the Communities Team and propose a future way of working to ensure service resilience.
- 5.7 In addition, due to the Council's commitment to Regenerating Rossendale, the review of the Communities Team presented an opportunity to review and strengthen our commitment to this priority.
- 5.8 Discussions with staff and Lead Members have been taking place since June 2013 and the following structural changes have now been agreed:
- Re-designate 1 Locality Manager post (scp39-44) to Parks and Open Spaces Manager (scp 39-44) to be based in the Operations Team;
  - Temporary re-designate the line management of 2 Locality Manager posts (scp 39-44) to the Health, Housing and Regeneration Team (12 months);
  - Dis-establish 2 Locality Officer posts (scp 28-32); and
  - Temporary re-designate 1 Locality Officer post (scp 28-32) to Environmental Enforcement Officer post (scp 28-32) and move the line management to Health, Housing and Regeneration (12 months).
- 5.9 Clearly with the reduction in the number of staff, there will also be an impact on the amount and nature of the work which can be delivered in the future. Discussions are underway about the re-prioritisation of work and some consultation is ongoing. Significantly this includes:
- A move away from locality based responsibilities, to a focus on projects based around town centres, tourism and wider regeneration including bringing vacant properties back into use;
  - Consultation with Neighbourhood Forums about future self-management of forums;
  - Development of an Environmental Enforcement Policy to clarify what work will be prioritised, delivered differently, or not delivered going forward.
- 5.10 One of the main impacts of the move away from locality based working is that any issues

identified in localities will have to be raised directly with the appropriate agency or department as there will be no longer be any Communities staff available to co-ordinate responses to those issues.

- 5.11 Another key impact is in relation to the amount and type of Environmental Enforcement activity which will be carried out with the significantly reduced capacity. An Environmental Enforcement Policy will be drafted and brought through the usual Overview and Scrutiny process for discussion.

**COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

**6. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 6.1 A saving of £58,700 will be realised following the dis-establishment of 2 Locality Officer posts.

**7. MONITORING OFFICER**

- 7.1 No additional comments.

**8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 8.1
- Cabinet – 12 June 2013.
  - Numerous meetings with staff June – September 2013.
  - Portfolio holder meetings June – September 2013.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 Given the scale of the savings challenge which faces Rossendale Borough Council, as set out in the report to Cabinet on 12 June 2013 – ‘Medium Term Financial Strategy – Achievement of Budget Reductions’, it has been necessary to review a number of service areas, including the Communities Team.

**Background Papers**

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Medium Term Financial Strategy – Achieval of Budget Reductions – report to Cabinet 12 June 2013	<a href="http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/769/cabinet.rossendale.gov.uk">wwwhttp://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/769/cabinet.rossendale.gov.uk</a>
Restructure of Operations and Communities Teams – Report to Cabinet 17 March 2011	<a href="http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/540/cabinet">http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/540/cabinet</a>